

**James Madison to Henry Lee, November 9, 1786.
Transcription: The Writings of James Madison,
ed. Gaillard Hunt. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons,
1900-1910.**

TO HENRY LEE.1 MAD. MSS. (*Copy.*)

1 “ Alexa. 20th. Decr. 86

“ My Dear Sir,—After the notification of my disgrace which reached me about the 20th Nov. I hastened from N York & pressed forward to my home. Every difficulty of weather and roads opposed my progress and retarded me effectually, for it took us three weeks to reach this place which I had reckoned on accomplishing in twelve days. At length we arrived on the banks of patomac, and thro our avidity to embrace our friends, were on the point of destruction for some hours, by rashly adventuring to cross in the night, thro' bodies of floating ice. But providence, kinder to me than my beloved country rescued my family & myself, with some detriment of sense but no injury to my reputation—striking difference to be sure, and a theme for unceasing admiration of the Supreme benevolence on my part. This subject always disturbs me & excites my resentment. But cruel & ungrateful as I estimate the treatment I have received from the assembly, I am frank to declare to you that the opinion I had formed of your dereliction of the friendship which existed between us rendered my affection doubly severe. In all nations precedents are to be found demonstrative of the caprice & indelicacy of public bodys, therefore being not alone I could have procured repose to my feelings that all who knew me, would attribute my dismissal to the proper cause.

“Your abandonment of a man who loved your character to excess & who esteemed your friendship among the first blessings of his life connected with the circumstance

Library of Congress

of your election to the office from which he was dismissed, together with many other considerations which are unnecessary to repeat wounded me deeply, & has given me many melancholy hours. Your letter of the 11th affords me some relief, & as it explains your intentions which before were subject to conjecture, strengthens my hope that you regard me as I have esteemed you, & that no difference in political sentiments ever has or ever can cool the affection which commenced in our youth, and till very lately has existed in full vigor. It is my wish that we may ever be united, & I believe you cannot question my sentiments, especially, when it relates to you.”—Henry Lee to Madison, *Mad. MSS.* Lee was soon restored to favor in the State. Madison wrote to him again November 23d.

Richmond Nov. 9th 1786.

Dear Sir, —The last mail went out at a time when I was so engaged that I could not drop a line to you—the task of first conveying to you the result of the elections for Congress here has therefore probably been performed by some of your other friends—The superiority which your reflection and firmness will maintain over the vicissitudes incident to public life, forbids any suggestions which may be calculated to abate a sensibility with regard to them—I will only assure you that the indelicacy of the situation in which your country has placed you is severely felt by those whose esteem you would most value.

The enclosed paper contains all the Legislative information worth giving you—Present my respectful compliments to Mrs. Lee, and assure yourself of my sincerest wishes for your happiness—

Yrs Affly. Js. Madison Jr.

To the Honble. Henry Lee New York